

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 448

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to create a special task force to study the effect of slavery on education.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly finds and declares that from the start of the transatlantic slave trade early in the 1500's to 1870, documented evidence estimates that 20-30 million Africans were involuntarily taken from Africa's shores and that 10-15 million died during the Middle Passage; and

WHEREAS, the Middle Passage was a horrific and terrifying psychological, social, and spiritual experience endured under the most atrocious conditions of human existence. Such conditions included extreme overcrowding "tween decks", inadequate ventilation, little to no sanitation, diseases such as yellow fever, suffocation, lice covered corpses, and having to exist in urine, blood, and human waste filled spaces smaller than that of a grave or in some cases stacked spoon-fashion on top of one another. In addition, "bed warming" or the raping of African girls/women, flogging with a "cat-o'-nine-tails", murder, and suicide were common occurrences. For those who survived the auction block, a life of involuntary servitude was guaranteed; and

WHEREAS, the systematic dehumanization of African captives during the Middle Passage was in reality horrific, life threatening/life ending, nightmarish and an experience, which the captive could not avoid; and

WHEREAS, all people should be educated to understand the horror of the Middle Passage and the economic, social, religious, and racial ideologies, which justified acts that defy the principles of what this country stands for; and

WHEREAS, to expose the injustices of the Middle Passage and its aftermath, it is desirable to educate our citizens about these atrocities and the organizations, businesses, governments, and people who created such a system of human and cultural destruction. It would also be desirable to investigate the possible multigenerational transmission of trauma

related symptoms and behaviors resulting from the Middle Passage in light of today's social conditions and problems which negatively impact the African American community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that there is hereby created a special task force to study the impact of the institution of slavery and of the Middle Passage on the ability of a student's ability to learn, with special attention to be paid to the effects upon African-American children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of one (1) member appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one (1) member appointed by the speaker of the senate, two (2) members to be appointed by the Governor; and one (1) member to be appointed by Tennessee's Legislative Black Caucus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special task force upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the task force reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special task force shall be convened by the member appointed by the Legislative Black Caucus, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the task force shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the 105th General Assembly, the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the House and Senate Education Committees no later than February 1, 2007, at which time the task force shall cease to exist.